

The PREVENTION CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER

Juvenile Justice in Montana

By Joy Mariska

The purpose of youth court—as stated in the Montana Youth Court Act—is to preserve the unity and welfare of families, to provide for the care, protection and development of youth, and to prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency.

Because juveniles are still developing their ability to make responsible choices, the juvenile justice system operates separately from the adult criminal justice system. The Youth Court Act expects that the significant responsibility, authority and rights of parents and children are upheld. Youth courts are required to develop programs that provide accountability, competency development and community protection, and to provide judicial procedures that are fair and that address the constitutional and statutory rights of youth and their parents.

Youth court has jurisdiction over all offenses committed by youth under age 18 (with the exception of traffic or fish and game violations) and exclusive jurisdiction in all cases in which a youth under the age of 18 is alleged to have committed a “delinquent” act, or an offense that would be criminal if it had been committed by an adult. Youth alleged to have committed a delinquent act may be detained in a locked

facility, as an adult would, if circumstances indicate that is the most appropriate course of action.

Youth court also has jurisdiction over “status” offenses, which are behaviors by children that are illegal simply due to their age, such as running away and other behaviors that extend beyond parental control. Status offenders may be adjudicated

as “youth in need of intervention,” but services are often provided for youth and their families in an effort to resolve the base issues. Many youth require special attention

to prevent their risk behaviors from escalating into higher risk, if not delinquent, behavior. If necessary, the youth court has the authority to place a youth outside the home for an extended period of time.

From the late 1980s into the mid-1990s, juvenile delinquency increased dramatically. Those numbers have subsided somewhat, and now have leveled off to what they were in the mid-1980s. This is true in Montana and consistent with national trends. Perhaps tougher laws put into place by legislatures around the country have had

their intended impact, but the positive effects of local prevention and intervention programs must also be appreciated.

The Youth Court Process

Accountability, community protection and competency development are the basis of all actions taken in youth court. When court services receives an arrest report regarding a juvenile, probation officers review it to decide whether or not the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the youth court. They also determine whether detention or other services provided are appropriate, whether the arrest was lawful, and if the youth and his/her parents were appropriately advised of their rights.

The youth and his/her parent(s) appear for an informal hearing before a juvenile

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Each year juvenile probation, through the 13th Judicial District Court Services in Yellowstone County, receives 1,400–1,600 juvenile arrest reports from local police and sheriffs’ departments. Approximately 75 percent are for juveniles who have been arrested for the first time.

Justice

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The Vicki Column

This issue marks the end of a series that used the *Blueprint for Montana's Future: A Living Document* as a jumping-off point. This report was presented to the Governor and to Attorney General Mike McGrath by the Governor's Task Force on Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Policy in September 2002. It provided a broad assessment of Montana's substance abuse issues and rested its analysis on the triangular foundation of prevention, treatment and justice. We envisioned three parallel issues, echoing these themes. Very quickly we realized that each of these topics was so broad that it couldn't possibly be addressed in a single issue. Ultimately, the series of three issues expanded into five. Even so, we've barely begun to scratch the surface and could easily expand the discussion in any or all of these areas.

As we researched the area of justice in Montana, we realized that a lot is going well. Those involved in the juvenile justice sys-

tem, including Montana's dedicated youth probation officers, work hard to make a difference in the lives of kids. Youth justice councils, juvenile corrections and many other programs and projects are creating a difference for youth and families on a daily basis. OPI's Montana Behavior Initiative starts at the very early end of the continuum, to address violence where it begins: with insults and name calling. The Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC) supports numerous prevention and intervention projects, all of which are doing great work in communities all over the state. There is a lot to be hopeful about, and yet a lot of work remains to be done.

So while this issue marks the end of a series, it also marks the beginning of an expanded perspective, one that brings together all of us who are working along the continuum in support of children and youth, families and communities throughout Montana.

Vicki

MYFIRES: Youth fire setting

Initial numbers show that Montana children under the age of 18 have set 29 fires in the last nine months, injuring nine people and killing two.

"As alarming as these statistics may be, they are a valuable starting point in the effort to address youth fire setting. There is always a reason a child sets fires. It may be a symptom of a need for better education and supervision, or it may be attention-getting behavior that is a symptom of something more significant." —Mike Batista, Administrator of the Division of Criminal Investigation.

In March 2003, seven communities—Bozeman, Frenchtown, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Miles City and Missoula—took part in a youth fire setting workshop. Since then, those communities have begun reporting youth fire setting incidents on a website.

Since March 2003 the seven participating communities have reported: 29 incidents of youth fire setting resulting in: 2 deaths, 9 injuries and 22 displaced people; and property losses of \$181,750. Nearly 50 percent of all incidents occurred inside the youths' homes. Children aged 10 to 12 accounted for 27.8 percent of youth fires set.

Sheryl Burright-Sebens, Education and Information Programs Manager for the Division of Criminal Investigation said the numbers only reflect incidents reported by participating communities, and that those communities make up about one-fourth of the state's population.

"The goal of the MYFIRES program is to provide local fire departments with a consistent assessment process for youth fire setters and their families," said Burright-Sebens "In turn, we hope to determine whether fire-setting problems may be solved through education or mental health intervention."

The fire marshal's office recently received a \$3,000 grant from the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) to provide training for mental health workers. A FEMA grant proposal was submitted in September 2003 and would underwrite mental health intervention service for young fire setters. The grant would also fund educational resources for fire departments taking part in MYFIRES and would expand the program to six more communities in Montana.

This article was gratefully excerpted from the news release available at <http://doj.state.mt.us/news/releases2003/12182003b.asp>.

Juvenile Justice in Montana

Continued from cover

probation officer—or in this district, a probation staff member designated as a hearing officer. They are advised of their rights, and the process and potential consequences are explained. The youth is given the opportunity to admit or deny the alleged offense(s) with the guidance of a parent or guardian, whose presence is required. Information about the youth and his/her family is collected. Often, part of the information obtained in this district includes a youth assessment, which involves the administration of a series of screening tools designed to determine the risk levels, needs and protective factors in a youth's life. Options may include no further action, an informal disposition, or referral to the county attorney, who then files a formal petition in youth court charging the youth to be a *delinquent youth* or a *youth in need of intervention*.

If the youth denies the offense, s/he has the option of consulting an attorney. Because most cases involve first time offenders and most youth take responsibility for their actions, most cases can be resolved through an informal process. If the youth and the parent agree with the informal disposition, they sign a Consent Adjustment. This written agreement contains all of the conditions probation staff have determined to be appropriate.

If a youth is alleged to have committed a serious offense or has a significant history in youth court, a formal hearing may be required by Montana law. The same kind of information is gathered to prepare for an informal hearing as for formal procedures. Once all of the information has been considered, it is summarized by the juvenile probation officer in a *Report to the Court*, which includes very specific recommendations to assist the youth court judge in making an informed decision. The youth court judge's order may result in a range of dispositional options ranging from release with no further actions taken, to placement in a juvenile correctional facility.

Under conditions defined by the Youth Court Act, the county attorney has the authority to prosecute a youth under the age of 18—in some cases youth as young as 12—as if they were an adult. In cases like these, a hearing is held before a district court judge to determine if the case should be transferred to youth court. The judge must consider the interests of community protection, the nature of the offense and best in-

terests of the youth. In this situation, youth most often have committed a very serious offense such as rape or homicide. Because commitment to the state is limited to age 18, time for treatment and rehabilitation is limited and becomes a major barrier to handling these cases in youth court.

Juvenile Probation Officers

Many juvenile offenders come from "normal" family environments, but many others come from families where little support, guidance or supervision is offered. Violence and the abuse of alcohol or other drugs are often serious problems in these homes. A significant number of youth with emotional disturbance or who have experienced abuse or neglect come to the attention of the youth court, so it is crucial for juvenile probation officers to be well informed and educated on these topics.

Most juvenile probation officers have either bachelors or masters degrees. In the 13th Judicial District, a masters is preferred. Several court services employees within this district are professionals licensed in mental health counseling and chemical dependency treatment. This level of education and expertise is helpful because of the significant problems of many of the youth who come into the juvenile justice system.

While juvenile probation officers are seen primarily as enforcers of court orders, they also have equally important roles as advocates, mentors, teachers and confidants. Juvenile probation officers are responsible for uncovering the combination of needs and assets in a young person's life. They also develop and supervise completion of plans designed to minimize the risk of reoffending.

Problems arise when children do not have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes early in life, or worse, learn a lesson that pushes them in the wrong direction. Juvenile probation officers are in a position to help young people make necessary changes and to understand the reasons why change is important. A commitment to community and a belief in the ability of children to change and grow is why career juvenile probation officers make this their life's work.

Joy Mariska is the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer for the 13th Judicial District that includes Yellowstone County. She worked from 1977-1989 in law enforcement, and then as a juvenile probation officer for the 13th Judicial District Court Services from 1990-1997. She was promoted to Director of Court Services in 1997.

Montana's Chief Juvenile Probation Officers

District 1 - Lewis & Clark &

Broadwater Counties

Dick Meeker, 447-8228

District 2 - Silver Bow County

Glen Granger, 497-6377

District 3 - Deer Lodge, Powell &

Granite Counties

Gary Loshesky, 563-4030

District 4 - Missoula & Mineral

Counties

Glen Welch, 523-4735

District 5 - Beaverhead, Jefferson &

Madison Counties

Joe Connell, 225-4060 ext. 63

District 6 - Park & Sweet Grass

Counties

Lawrence Martin, 222-4162

District 7 - Dawson, Richland,

McCone, Wibaux & Prairie Counties

Scott Watkins, 337-4675

District 8 - Cascade County

Dick Boutilier, 454-6880

District 9 - Glacier, Pondera, Teton &

Toole Counties

Sue Walley, 271-4035

District 10 - Fergus, Judith Basin &

Petroleum Counties

Mike Otto, 538-9242

District 11 - Flathead County

Patrick Warnecke, 758-5541

District 12 - Chouteau, Hill & Liberty

Counties

Robert Peake, 265-5481 ext. 43

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Notes From the Edge

By Leroy Bingham

I'm an angry "breed." I come from a long line of "breeds."

W

e became a "breed" family way back in the 1830's. My great-great-great grandfather, Richard Grant, was a high-ranking official with the Hudson Bay Company up in Fort Saskatchewan in Canada. After the death of his first wife, he shipped their three children back to Montreal to his mother. He then met and fell in love with a Chippewa Indian woman, whom we remember only by her Christian name—Sarah. It was quite acceptable for him to take an Indian woman to his bed, but his associates were horrified at the depth of their caring for one another. I have read letters and reports that show the level of the company's concern and their determination to put an end to the relationship. They were successful. Richard Grant was transferred to Fort Hall, Idaho in the late 1830s and Sarah was married off to another (lower level) employee of the Hudson Bay Company. She was lost to our family from that point unto this very day, but their relationship did produce one child, a boy, my great-great grandfather, James C. Grant. His was the line that leads to me and to my own grandchildren.

In 1846, Richard had his children sent out to him in Fort Hall. The family became early Montana pioneers. A later marriage produced a daughter, Julia, who married Missoula's Christopher Higgins; a son from the first marriage, Johnny F. Grant, was prominent in the development of the Deer Lodge valley (the Grant-Kohrs Ranch was his place). My "breed" great-great grandfather married into the Blackfeet Tribe and settled in the Two Medicine-Dupuyer area.

When I was born 50 years ago in Great Falls, the Indian side of the family appalled my father's people by enrolling me, and later my sister, in the Blackfeet Tribe.

The point of all of this is not a lesson

in my personal genealogy or in Montana history. What I'm really trying to do is use my family history to point out the long-standing conflict and mistrust between Indian and non-Indian. My anger is that it continues to this day. My family has been living with the conflict for more than 170 years, and I have something to say about it.

On many occasions, my friends and associates in Montana State government have heard me advocate for greater Tribal involvement in the work of the State. I get angry when no mention is made of Montana's poorest communities—the reservations—in the State's Workforce Development Plan. I get angry when the Board of Crime Control claims that disproportionate justice issues are getting better. I get angry when agencies tell me that they don't know how many Indians they serve, because they don't want to ask the "race" question. I get angry because I know that if they *did* ask the "race" question it might show that efforts are not being concentrated where they're most needed. I get angry when I learn that Indian children in Montana are 4 to 7 times over-represented in Montana's children's mental health system. I'm angry that we all seem to want to ignore the fact that the emperor is wearing no clothes. Yes, we know the old boy is naked, but let's pretend we don't notice.

On the other side of the equation, I'm just as angry. I'm angry when I beat up some poor State employee for not seeking Tribal input and they tell me they *did* seek input but received nothing in return. I'm angry that we haven't developed our Tribal governments beyond the myopic vision of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I'm angry when the State is redesigning the children's mental health system—a system that hugely impacts Indian families—and Tribal representatives haven't kicked down the door to get to the table. I'm angry when I see that our lack of engagement with State government allows priorities to be set without Tribal input. I'm angry that we have

allowed the State off the hook.

There is a tradition among Plains Indians that for reasons of his own, a warrior in battle might plant his lance firmly in the earth, then tie himself to that planted lance. The significance of this gesture was to say that no matter what, the warrior would not leave that spot, even if it cost his life. Fully recognizing that we have much mutual mistrust to overcome, let us all make a similar commitment: as painful as it might be, our

governments *have* to be accountable and they have to work together. If for no other reason, we should make this commitment because we all

love our children and want this to be a place where they can flourish and grow.

That is the "justice" that I'm looking for. I want it for Richard and Sarah. I want it for me. I want it for my grandchildren. And I want it for Montana.

Leroy Bingham
January 2, 2004

I am throwing down a challenge to both State and Tribal governments: You cannot afford to ignore one another any longer.

Cool Links

American Council for Drug Education: Basic Facts on Drugs—<http://www.acde.org/educate/Research.htm>

Parents: the Antidrug—<http://www.theantidrug.com>

Western CAPT: Building a Successful Prevention Program—http://www.unr.edu/westcapt/best_practices/commread.htm

Drug Enforcement Administration Drug Descriptions—<http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/concern.htm>

Coach a Kid in the Game of Life—<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>

Montana's Juvenile Corrections Division: *an Overview*

By Steve Gibson, Administrator

The Juvenile Corrections Division integrates diverse professional activities to develop and implement short- and long-range plans designed to serve youth committed to the Department of Corrections, as well as the communities to which the youth invariably return. Three bureaus within the division provide these services.

Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility is a 144 bed secure facility in Miles City for juvenile males, ages 10–17. The facility is accredited by the American Correctional Association and it offers: year-round classes at its fully accredited school; counseling using the cognitive restructuring approach; specific treatment programs for chemical dependency and sexual offending; opportunity for participation in spiritually enhancing activities; registered nurses on staff and contracts for medical services.

Riverside Youth Correctional Facility is a secure facility in Boulder for up to 20 juvenile females, ages 10–17. The treatment program is sensitive to young women's needs and also uses the cognitive restructuring approach. Riverside offers: year-round classes at a fully accredited school; life skills groups; Young Women's Lives groups; opportunity for participation in spiritually enhancing activities; nurses on staff; and doctors in Boulder and Helena who provide health services as the need dictates.

The education department, while teaching all basic courses, has also incorporated the nationally recognized curriculum "Street Law" into the weekly schedule. All youth attend a weekly two-hour class dedicated to this program. Community speakers such as county attorneys and city administrators routinely come to present to this class on topics pertaining to civics.

The Juvenile Community Corrections Bureau includes juvenile parole, juvenile placement and related financial services, juvenile interstate compact, a youth transition center, transportation, detention

licensing and training. Juvenile probation is under the administration of the Supreme Court.

The Juvenile Community Corrections Bureau, in conjunction with Pine Hills and Riverside, is developing "guide homes." These are foster homes for hard-to-place youth. This bureau is also developing community mentors and enhancing faith-based services for youth reintegrating into communities. Guide Homes are administered through a contract with Missoula Youth Homes and we anticipate placing up to 20 youth per year in homes developed throughout the state.

The Mentor Program is being administered through a contract with Mountain Peaks, Inc. We anticipate assisting up to 50 youth per year through mentoring services that may offer as much as daily guidance, support with reminders and community contacts, and transportation to medical or counseling services.

Faith Based Services are being administered through a contract with an ordained pastor and in cooperation with Parish Nurses throughout the state. Parish Nurses are all Registered Nurses who have completed additional training. This service will provide faith connections for youth expressing such a desire, some medical services as well as medical expertise for youth and their supportive community team members.

Despite the challenges, Montana's Juvenile Corrections Division has many opportunities. We also benefit from a combination of factors intrinsic to Montana. The Division strives to take full advantage of a small population, competent, well-educated, dedicated staff members and ready access to information on best practices and current trends. The Division continues to examine other states' developing programs and outcomes, which allows us to choose from the best available and to adjust concepts to fit the unique needs of this unquestionably rural state.

Steve Gibson is the Administrator of the Juvenile Corrections Division of the Montana Department of Corrections. For more information, he can be reached at sgibson@state.mt.us.

Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)

Mission: *To create and sustain a coordinated and comprehensive system of prevention services in the State of Montana.*

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Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
Judicial District 2

Sheila Stearns
Commissioner of Higher Education

Lori Ryan
Acting State Coordinator of Indian Affairs

Jean Branscum
Ex-officio Governor's Office

Montana Board of Crime Control: *An Introduction*

By Roland M. Mena, Executive Director

Mission: To promote public safety, crime prevention, and victim assistance, by strengthening the coordination and performance of both criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice Systems in partnership with citizens, government, and communities.



Montana Board of Crime Control

William Mercer (Chair), U.S. Attorney

Elaine Allestad, Sweet Grass
County Commissioner

Robert Brooks, Citizen at Large

Clifford Brophy, Stillwater County Sheriff

Alex Capdeville, Chancellor

Mack Cole, Citizen at Large

John Flynn, Broadwater County Attorney

Bob Jones, Great Falls Police Chief

Rick Kirn, Fort Peck Executive Board

Marko Lucich, Executive Director Butte-
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Dwight MacKay, U.S. Marshal

Mike McGrath, Attorney General

Jim Oppedahl, Court Administrator

Steve Rice, Pastor and Chair
of the Youth Justice Council

Godfrey Saunders, Bozeman
High School Principal

Margaret (Peg) Shea, Executive
Director, Western Montana
Addiction Service

Bill Slaughter, Department of
Corrections Director

Janet Stevens, Citizen at Large

As the new Executive Director of the Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC), I have become increasingly aware of the need for a balance among prevention, treatment and justice. As the state's designated planning and program development agency for the criminal justice system, the MBCC is in a unique position of being able to help Montana achieve that balance. The focus of the MBCC is preventing and addressing crime in Montana. We make Montana a safer state, partially by providing funding to a variety of worthwhile local, regional and statewide projects. We provide for prevention through Safe and Drug Free Schools and help fund Montana's drug task forces. We work for victims through the administration of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Violence Against Women (VAWA) funds.

The Board of Crime Control also administers federal anti-drug and anti-crime grants, which include federal Byrne Funds. These are made available to local governments for authorized anti-drug and anti-crime efforts. In order to know whether or not we are achieving our goals, we also collect and analyze juvenile and adult crime and detention data from law enforcement agencies across Montana, then provide a central data collection point for crime reporting.

The Youth Justice Council supports the mission of the Board of Crime Control in the juvenile justice arena. With funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the Council funds projects designed to intervene in a youth's progression from the juvenile justice system into the adult criminal justice system. Current activities include community planning grants to assess and improve the continuum of services at the local level. The Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee of the Youth Justice Council examines the over-representa-

tion of minority youth at various points of contact within the juvenile justice system. (For more information on the Youth Justice Council, see page 7.)

Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) provides training, curriculum review and approval, various certifications and decertification. It also maintains training records for numerous professionals involved in corrections and other public arenas, and provides technical assistance. The POST Director administers the Juvenile Detention Grant Program, which consists of reimbursing juvenile detention costs to five regions within the state. This position attends regional juvenile detention meetings, provides juvenile detention training and technical assistance, and audits licensed juvenile detention centers for compliance with the Montana Youth Court Act and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act on the federal level.

I believe that Montana must take a comprehensive, holistic approach to crime. Corrections and law enforcement are crucial pieces to the puzzle, but they are only one leg of the stool – they can't stand alone. Prevention is critical. Children who experience sufficient exposure to protective factors are far less likely to engage in risk behaviors that include—or result in—crime. By using science-based best practices, we *can* prevent many children and youth from ever becoming involved with the justice system.

We also know that much of the crime in Montana is related, in one way or another, to alcohol and/or drug abuse. This means that the third leg of the stool has to be effective treatment. Until we reach the root of a problem, the problem will not end. I want to help ensure that Montana is solidly positioned on a stool with three balanced legs. Stay tuned: the best is yet to come. With a solid vision and a lot of hard work, the Board of Crime Control will be able to make a real difference for Montana.

For more information, Roland Mena can be reached at rmena@state.mt.us.

See MBCC Resources On-line at <http://www.mbcc.state.mt.us/sac/index.shtml>

MBCC Grant Opportunities: <http://www.mbcc.state.mt.us/grants/index.shtml>

Montana's Youth Justice Council

By Audrey Allums, Juvenile Justice Program Specialist, MBCC

One of the lesser-known—but vital—councils working within the juvenile justice system is the Youth Justice Council. The Council meets quarterly to provide oversight on issues key to juvenile justice in Montana. Their ultimate mission is to improve the lives of youth in the system, who are there for a variety of reasons. Many have mental health problems, are chemically dependent, have been abused or neglected. Many have just made a wrong decision. The Youth Justice Council endeavors to intervene in the lives of these youth in a positive way through planning, funding and promotion of policies that enable youth to become part of the community.

The 22 members of the Youth Justice Council are appointed by the Governor. They represent various agencies and organizations that work with youth. The Youth Justice Council strives for balanced representation from the continuum of services available to Montana youth. Additionally, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act requires that no more than fifty percent of the Council be comprised of government employees. One fifth of the members must be under the age of 25 at the time of appointment and three must have been involved directly in the juvenile justice system. A special committee of the Youth Justice Council also meets to address the issue of minority youth, as well as the contacts those youth make with the juvenile justice system.

The Youth Justice Council oversees funding provided through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP Act) requires such a council to oversee federal funds and mandates, as well as to provide advocacy for youth in the juvenile justice system. Federal mandates include sight and sound separation, deinstitutionalization of youth and addressing disproportionate minority contact.

Overseeing and distributing federal juvenile block grant funds is one of the most important tools the Youth Justice Council has, and it is a tool the Council uses to improve systems in Montana. Historically, the Youth Justice Council has provided funding to supporting a Balanced Approach and

Restorative Justice (BARJ) system. The Council has funded programs that look at the offender, the victim and the community. Community youth justice councils are active across Montana, and were provided seed money to establish BARJ programs in their communities. The Youth Justice Council also provided funding to start the Montana Behavior Initiative program through OPI as well as the Montana Children's Initiative. The Council has supported family functional therapy and other best practices programming with an eye to improving the lives of Montana youth.

In 2003, the Youth Justice Council took on a new priority for Juvenile Justice funds. A planning meeting held in December 2002 brought together 60 professionals from the juvenile justice field, who together provided insight into the juvenile justice system. Participants generally agreed that there is a great need for data, assessment and the evaluation of services and programs in the juvenile system. Many communities have a number of programs for youth, but have developed these programs independently of one another without the benefit of comprehensive planning. On the basis of this information, the Youth Justice Council set a priority of community planning for the next three years. Communities are encouraged to go through a year of assessment and planning to identify service gaps and to start building the infrastructure needed to provide comprehensive services for youth.

The Youth Justice Council also supports legislation that strengthens the juvenile justice system. By supporting a forum for thoughtful, professional advancement, and by maintaining a steady presence before the state legislature, the Youth Justice Council serves as an advocate for youth and the entire juvenile justice system, guiding and reinforcing the level of public commitment in an effort to impact the well-being of all Montana communities.

Audrey Allums is a Juvenile Justice Program Specialist with the Montana Board of Crime Control. She can be reached at aallums@state.mt.us. For more information on current requests for proposals through the Montana Board of Crime Control, visit <http://bccdoj.doj.state.mt.us/grants/index.shtml> on the web.

Children have more need of models than of critics.

— Joseph Joubert (1754-1824)



Youth Justice Council

Steve Rice (Chair), Faith Based Organizations

Peggy Beltrone, Cascade County Commissioner

Karin Billings, Youth Advocate

Shanna Bulik-Chism, Administrator of Cascade County Regional Youth Services Center

John Chappius, Deputy Director of DPHHS

Cathy Kendall, Coordinated School Health Unit Director for OPI

Tracy King, Chair of Disproportionate Minorities in Confinement

Marko Lucich, Executive Director of Butte-Silver-Bow Chamber of Commerce

Jeff Mangan, Legislator

Robert Peake, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

Shae Saunders, Student

Frances Combs, Fort Peck Law Enforcement Officer

Michael Donahoe, Assistant Federal Defender

Steve Gibson, Administrator of Juvenile Corrections Division

Hon. Pedro R. Hernandez, Justice of the Peace

Joe Johnson, Student

Sally Stansberry, Senior Program Director of Missoula Youth Homes

Tony Wagner, Director of Blackfeet Youth Initiative

Nancy Wickle, Grant Coordinator, Native American Liaison

Katie Yother, Student

Restorative Justice Conference

When: May 17-18, 2004

Where: Grouse Mountain Resort, Whitefish, Montana

Featured Speaker:

Dennis Maloney, former Director of the Department of Community Corrections in Deschutes County, Oregon.

All are welcome. Through the use of grant funds, the conference will be of the highest quality, yet remain affordable.

For more information, contact Joan Eiel at (406) 444-5803

MNA to Offer Health Insurance

Beginning in March, the Montana Nonprofit Association (MNA) will offer an association health care plan in partnership with New West Health Services, exclusively for MNA members.

Highlights of the plan include:

- Multiple preferred plans that offer a premium discount,
- Coverage for nonprofits of all sizes including those with a single employee,
- Coverage for spouses and dependents,
- Low employer premium contribution minimums, and
- Added value wellness programs.

Informational materials will be sent out this spring to nonprofits. For further information contact MNA at (406) 449-3717 or visit www.newwesthealth.com

Crime is a Wound: Montana's Restorative Justice Program

By Joan Eiel



When a crime is committed, there are always injuries. Those injuries may not be visible to the human eye, but they exist. There are injuries to the victims of crime, to the community in which the crime was committed, and to the offender who committed the crime. Restorative justice believes that if crime is a wound, then justice should be the salve that heals it.

A priority of our current justice system is to denounce harmful behavior and provide consequences, but by focusing primarily on the offender, the victim and the community are left out of the process. A three-legged stool cannot stand on one leg; it should come as no surprise that in the eyes of many, our current system is a failure.

The criminal act is not simply an act against the state. If a person were to get drunk, climb in their car, head down the back alleys knocking over garbage cans and scattering garbage all over a neighborhood, would it be more effective for the offender to face a judge, pay some fines and do some community service—or face the neighbors who were affected, make restitution and apologize?

Restorative justice focuses on crime as *harm* and justice as *repairing the harm*. It elevates the visibility of the crime victim, yet views victim, offender, and community as equally worthy of criminal justice services. Each is seen as an important, active participant in the response to crime.

While sanctions are of foremost interest to the state in criminal prosecutions, *accountability* is key for the victim and the community. Restorative justice believes that it is the responsibility of the offender to actively restore, by his or her own efforts, those who have been wronged or harmed.

During the 2001 Legislative Session, Representative Christine Kaufmann proposed house Bill 637, which created the Office of Restorative Justice within the

Montana Department of Justice. This office was created to provide restorative justice training and technical assistance to government and non-profit entities.

Over the past two years, staff has participated in restorative justice trainings. The office has helped fund several projects of Restorative Justice in response to local needs. Projects have included *Community Circles* in Missoula—a program built on the tradition of the “talking circles” common among the indigenous peoples of North America. This program gives a voice to all affected parties, including the offender. It designs restitution as appropriate or mandated, proposes a positive path for the offender and offers support throughout the process. A second project, focusing on victim/offender mediation, was held on the Flathead Reservation with the Salish Kootenai Tribe. Our office also has a key role in the Department of Corrections Juvenile Offender Re-entry Project, and assisted in the creation of a restorative justice program in Plentywood, Montana.

Relationships have been developed with key stakeholders across the spectrum of the youth criminal justice system. Currently, we are planning a restorative justice training in Kalispell for youth

offenders and are working with members of the Rocky Boys Tribe on the potential for a reservation-based restorative justice program.

We remain encouraged by the interest in restorative justice expressed by many groups and individuals around the state. If you would like more information, or would like to be part of our e-mail listserv, contact the Office of Restorative Justice at (406) 444-5803 or jeliel@state.mt.us.

Joan Eiel is a Program Specialist with the Office of Victim Services and Restorative Justice in the Attorney General's Office.

Restorative justice puts a face on crime. It gives the offender an opportunity to be held accountable and “restored” to the community. Restorative justice is personal.

A Perfect World

By Carol Stratemeyer

Sixty percent (60%) of the youth appearing before youth court are first-time offenders. Three-fourths of all first-time referrals are handled informally. (<http://bccdoj.doj.state.mt.us/>)

In a perfect world, parents would have an abundance of time and energy to spend with their children—and children would not make bad choices based upon a fleeting perception of ‘cool.’ In this perfect world, the juvenile justice system would be designed to help the parents get their kids back on track in the rare event they *did* make mistakes.

As we know, we don’t live in a perfect world. Between January 1, 2003 and January 4, 2004—113 youth in Ravalli County were put on probation for the first time. Each has a story and a family.

Susan* is a 15 year-old freshman in a local high school. She was cited by the Hamilton Police Department for smoking pot in the school parking lot. Her parents were devastated. Susan had always been a good student, obeyed the rules at home and had never had given them a reason to worry.

LuAnn* is Susan’s best friend. She was also cited for smoking pot in the parking lot, but LuAnn had been involved with the legal system in the past. LuAnn’s parents were exasperated. Her behavior at home was defiant, her grades barely above failing and she rarely obeyed any of the house rules. What these girls have in common are parents who care. Susan lives with her mom and step-dad; LuAnn’s parents have been together since they were both in high school. All four parents work full-time and there are siblings in both homes.

Designing a punishment to fit each girl’s crime and to administer ‘justice’ is a challenge that requires time, planning and the ability to administer flexible sentencing. By applying graduated sanctions, each girl’s crime can be treated with equity based on the offense, the number of previous offenses and the ability for the youth to complete the sanctions without overly stressing the youth and her parents.

Creating graduated sanctions means that the punishment will fit the crime and that the youth will “pay her debt” to the legal system by fulfilling an agreement that allows for all aspects of a youth’s sentence to be dealt with. When a first time offender, such as Susan, appears for her ‘intake,’ an agreement is made and we proceed to an

informal probation—meaning that she won’t appear before the a judge and won’t be labeled ‘convicted of a crime.’ The probation officer explains to her and to her parents what happens at the next level if she is cited again. This time, Susan will pay \$100 in fines, complete 24 hours of community service, a drug education course and a chemical dependency assessment. She will also have to submit to random drug testing for a month.

LuAnn has “been there before” and what she must do will be very different than what Susan will be required to do—and she knows it. LuAnn will be required to pay \$200 in fees, complete 48 hours of community service (double that of a first offense), complete a chemical dependency evaluation and abide by stipulations of the evaluation, check in with her probation officer and submit to random drug testing for three months.

Both sets of parents will be given education regarding drug use and abuse and information on community resources. They will also be required to attend some of the education sessions with their daughters.

By creating a system of graduated sanctions for *all* criminal behavior, the juvenile justice system is getting a little closer to that unattainable “perfect” world. Our job is to quit blaming parents, schools and society for juvenile delinquency and start doing our part to work with the ‘family’ system to get youth back on track—and to provide Justice.

*Note: The names and characters are based on common situations, but do not reflect actual people or events.

Carol Stratemeyer is the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer for the 21st Judicial District, which includes Ravalli County. She can be reached at cstratemeyer@state.mt.us.

The 21st Judicial District Youth Court Services designs each probation sentence in accordance with a step-up standard that is applied to all youth—regardless of their parents social standing, school involvement or their ability to tell a good story.

Montana’s Chief Juvenile Probation Officers

Continued from Page 3

District 13 - Yellowstone County

Joy Mariska, 256-2838

District 14 - Golden Valley, Meagher, Musselshell & Wheatland Counties

Donna Marmon, 323-1714

District 15 - Roosevelt, Sheridan & Daniels Counties

Butch Olsen, 653-6263

District 16 - Carter, Custer, Fallon, Garfield, Powder River, Rosebud & Treasure Counties

Ernest “Sonny” Butts, 874-3418

District 17 - Blaine, Phillips & Valley Counties

Clark Kelly, 654-2087

District 18 - Gallatin County

Vicky Nelson, 582-2180

District 19 - Lincoln County

Kindra Hageness, 293-7781 ext. 240

District 20 - Lake & Sanders Counties

Barbara Monaco, 883-7264

District 21 - Ravalli County

Carol Stratemeyer, 363-4300

District 22 - Big Horn, Carbon & Stillwater Counties

John “Jack” Lane, 665-9815

Beyond the Circle

By Priya Mahanti

Two million children in this country are living in the shadow of a parent's crime. Children of inmates are part of the forgotten ones. Society has always focused on inmates and their victims, but the children of incarcerated parents are also the victims of a parent's crime. These children live in environments un-

imaginable to most Americans. The children suffer economic and emotional loss. They understand that their parents' choices have orphaned them and stigmatized them. The children of inmates are at increased risk for depression, school failure, drug use, delinquency and poverty.

Beyond the Circle is a mentoring program that gives the children of incarcerated parents a positive and supportive experience.

Beyond the Circle provides at least two enjoyable events for these children each month. For example, in December, we took the older girls out on the town. They dressed up, went out to dinner and to the ballet, then sat on the edge of their seats during the *Nutcracker*.

The center of the program is a summer camp called Camp Sky Child. The camp is provided at no cost to families, and is funded by a grant from the Montana

Board of Crime Control. The children look forward to this camp all year long. The camp is a week-long, intensive therapeutic experience. The children who come get to experience what it feels like to be a kid. At camp, they are involved in a wide range of regular activities and meet a number of special guests. Activities include crafts, swimming, horseback riding, archery, sports, karaoke, and drama.

Children eat meals family style, together at a table, not in front of a television or on the couch. The children also get to experience Thanksgiving dinner with all

the fixings, served by their counselors. On another day there is a great Easter basket hunt. Next year, they might get Christmas too! Maggie Hooker, *Beyond the Circle* Program Director, recalls her first time at camp, "... I saw children who came to camp with the clothes on their backs, one

shoe, no socks, no sleeping bag, stuffing food into the

Patrick, a long-time camper, says, "I wish we could stay at camp forever, it would be even more fun."

pockets of ragged coats because they were afraid they wouldn't get another meal. By mid-week the children were laughing and singing songs, just like other kids at camp. The night before they were to go home, the laughter turned to tears—the protective walls were rebuilt and in place ... "

The mission of *Beyond the Circle* is to break the cycle of dysfunction for children and families that suffer the repercussions of having a parent in prison. Maggie Hooker says, "the circle of life is a Native American concept signifying a culture that continues unbroken. The continuity and security provided by this concept is great—as long as the circle is one that fosters love, brotherhood, and family. Unfortunately, some children are caught in a circle that offers not security, but continuous neglect, poverty, shame and embarrassment."

The monthly activities that *Beyond the Circle* provides give the children a chance to engage in healthy adult and peer relationships and offers them a place to go where they know that they will be safe. The mentoring program also allows children who do not trust *anyone* to build a relationship with a positive person they can trust.

Dr. Deb Kottel, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies at the University of Great Falls, started this camp eleven years ago. The precious hearts of Dr. Kottel, the students at the University of Great Falls, the Montana Board of Crime Control and others make *Beyond the Circle* and *Camp Sky Child* a reality—a supportive reality for a few children.

Priya Mahanti is a senior at the University of Great Falls. She offers special thanks to Dr. Deb Kottel, Maggie Hooker and Anna Rosteck.



Camp Sky Child gives children whose daily lives consist of horrific conditions an umbrella from the storm.

One young girl had tears running down her face. "I didn't know anything so beautiful existed," she said.

Accountability and Retention

By Beau Snell

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ARC students generally range in age from 13–16 and for every young woman served, there are 8–10 young men. ARC serves 15–20 youth per year.

The Accountability and Retention Classroom (ARC) in Helena is run by the Montana Youth Homes in a unique collaboration among the Youth Homes, Helena Public Schools and Juvenile Probation. It can serve up to five youth at a time, all of whom are on suspended commitments to Pine Hills or Riverside – and all of whom have been referred to the program by a juvenile probation officer. Most have been expelled from the traditional school system or have behaviors that are rendering them inappropriate candidates for mainstream classrooms. Some live in youth shelters or group homes, some with their parents. Most have substance abuse issues, and many are in out-patient treatment as well as in ARC. All come in a last-ditch effort to stay in the community and out of the corrections system.

The classroom is computer-based. Students use the PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations) system, which assesses a student's academic level, then provides work in the core subjects—math, science, social studies and English. Since many have been diagnosed as oppositionally defiant or conduct disorder, they are assigned individual work stations with dividers between them to prevent disruption. Helena Public Schools gives credit for all of the work accomplished in the ARC classroom, which usually means the difference between receiving credit for the semester or losing the time.

Education is the focus at ARC, but students provide 1.5 hours of community service a day, often helping pick up one of the local parks, shoveling walks at the facility or providing labeling services for bulk mailings. They are supervised at all times by a staff that includes 23–24 members, which provides a 2:5 student: staff ratio.

Rules are tighter at ARC than they are in the traditional classroom. Less absenteeism is allowed—six absences per semester as versus ten in the mainstream schools—and all must be excused. ARC is conducted year round with just three days off at Christmas. Many, if not most, of ARC's students are on house arrest, and a tight monitoring system is in place, with Montana Youth Homes staff routinely checking on students during out-of-school

hours and on weekends. The classroom has two video cameras that capture the school day on tape. There is also a conference room that can be used to separate kids who continue to act out.

A typical day at ARC begins at 7:30, when parents or guardians drop their children off. Students aren't allowed to bring anything with them except gum and lip balm. All school supplies are provided, as are uniforms of khaki pants, a black sweater or t-shirt (depending on the season) and plain blue or black sneakers. Students are supervised by same-sex staff members while they change into uniforms.

For the next hour, they read the newspaper and discuss current events, then move onto classroom work from 8:30–9:30. After that, they have a 15-20 minute break for snacks, more PLATO, community service, then a brown bag lunch provided by the school. The afternoon is filled with academics, with one snack break. Parents pick their children up between 2:40 and 3 P.M. Parents or their designee must sign the student out before they can leave the grounds.

The program is fairly simple—it's not 24/7, but it is close. It's highly structured and highly disciplined—and it's often enough to turn a kid around. Kids need to be held accountable, and families need to be involved. This program requires a huge commitment from the family, and a willingness to work with the program and the child.

The results? Kids tell us they like ARC. They must. Very few kids fail in this program. Success has been in short supply for most of these kids, but they're finding success at ARC, then moving on with their lives. About 85 percent of these kids are able to return to mainstream schools after leaving the Accountability and Retention Classroom.

Beau Snell is the Executive Director of Montana Youth Homes in Helena. ARC is unique in Montana and has been up and running for a little over a year. Funding comes from juvenile probation funds. For more information, contact Beau Snell at Montana Youth Homes at 449-3038 or mtyouth@hotmail.com.

Of those who have been expelled from ARC, only one has not gone on to Pine Hills or Riverside.

Why Youth Drop Out

Youth who have dropped out of school listed the following school-based and personal reasons:

- *Didn't like school in general or the school they were attending.*
- *Were failing, getting poor grades, or couldn't keep up with school work.*
- *Didn't get along with teachers and/or students.*
- *Had disciplinary problems, were suspended, or expelled.*
- *Didn't feel safe in school.*
- *Got a job, had a family to support, or had trouble managing school and work.*
- *Got married, pregnant or became a parent.*
- *Had a drug or alcohol problem.*

<http://www.focusas.com/Dropouts.html>

Governors' Spouses Initiative

Editor's Note: The following information was pulled from the Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free website at <http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/en/us/index.cfm#bookmark2>. This vital initiative has been particularly effective because of the quality of research and the efforts of state leadership. There is also a Leadership Emeritus Group that enables spouses who have completed their terms to continue sharing their knowledge and experience on the prevention of underage drinking by participating in *Leadership* activities. Former First Lady of Montana, Theresa Racicot, is integrally involved in these efforts and was the 2003 co-chair of the group.

REPORT TO CONGRESS

The National Academies' Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council released a much-anticipated Report to Congress in September 2003 entitled "Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility." The committee preparing the report was charged with reviewing existing programs and approaches and developing a strategy to reduce underage drinking. Emphasis was placed on adopting an inclusive strategy, one that invites everyone to take responsibility for combating the problem. The committee based its considerations on the social context in which underage drinking occurs. This included five elements—that alcohol is:

- Easy for youth to get;
- Obtained from adults in commercial and social outlets;
- Advertised in venues that reach youth;
- Prominent in entertainment media; and
- Cheaper than it was 30-40 years ago (when adjustments are made for inflation).

The report can be viewed in its entirety online at <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309089352/html/>

Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free

Alcohol use begins at a very young age, and the proportion of young people who drink often or heavily is alarming. The *Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free* initiative is alerting the Nation to this critical public health problem and mobilizing action to prevent it. The *Leadership* initiative—a unique coalition of governors' spouses, federal agencies, and public and private organizations—is a campaign to prevent the use of alcohol by children ages 9 to 15. It is the only national effort that focuses on this age group.

The data on the onset of alcohol use at very young ages is compelling and demonstrates the need for a prevention campaign. Following are some statistics compiled from science-based research:

- The 2001 Household Survey found that over 4 million youngsters aged 12-17 had used alcohol at least once in the month immediately prior to the survey. This increased from 3.8 million in 2000. Over 8 million youth aged 12-17 used alcohol in the past year in 2001, and over 10 million in that age group had used alcohol sometime in their lifetime.
- One in five eighth graders has used alcohol in the past 30 days.
- Children have easy access to alcohol, often in their own homes.
- Adults may overlook signs of early alcohol use or fail to intervene in what many consider a "rite of passage."
- The age at which a person first uses alcohol is a powerful predictor of life-



time alcohol abuse and dependence. More than 40 percent of individuals who start drinking before the age of 13 will develop alcohol abuse or alcohol dependency at some time in their lives. Moreover, if the onset of drinking is delayed until age 21, a child's risk of serious alcohol problems is decreased by as much as 70 percent.

- Alcohol usage may have profound and persistent effects on children's physical and psychological development. Serious, often lifelong consequences, for health and well-being can result.
- Research demonstrates that adolescents who use alcohol may remember 10 percent less of what they have learned than those who do not drink.

Goals of the Initiative

The *Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free* strives to prevent early use of alcohol by children. The four goals of the *Leadership* initiative and the Governors' Spouses pledge are:

- Educate the public about the incidence and impact of early alcohol use by children between 9 and 15 years of age;
- Energize the public to address these issues within their families, schools, and communities in a sustained way that seeks to elicit change;
- Focus the attention of State and national policymakers and opinion leaders on the seriousness of the early onset of alcohol use; and
- Make prevention of alcohol use by children a national priority.

For more information, visit the web at: www.alcoholfreechildren.org

Montana: *Keeping Our Kids Safe*

By Jean Branscum

Doing all we can to keep children alcohol free—and to make sure people understand why it's important—is critically important to Montana. Based on the responses of 19,585 8th, 10th and 12th graders to the biannual Prevention Needs Assessment for 2002, Montana students ranked 4th in the nation for the use of alcohol. This is particularly disturbing because of what we are just now learning about continuing brain development during adolescence. The complex neurobehavioral changes that occur in adolescence interact with the social context in which our youth find themselves. Often this has the effect of putting them at high risk for participating in alcohol use, particularly if they find themselves in environments where drinking is not only accepted but the norm.

Governor Judy Martz wholeheartedly supports the Leadership Initiative. In 2001, Governor Martz and Attorney General Mike McGrath formed the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Control Policy Task Force to assess the drug and substance abuse issues facing Montana. She also asked the Task Force to focus on strategies to address the methamphetamine issue and to recommend comprehensive changes to Montana's DUI and open container laws. She supported addressing some of these issues through legislation, including instituting tougher blood alcohol content (BAC) limits, increasing the penalties for repeat DUI offenders, addressing treatment for offenders and creating laws against open containers in vehicles. The Task Force went on to develop statewide drug control strategy recommendations, and presented its completed report to the Governor in September 2002. Many of their recommendations found their way to the 2002 Legislature.

Issues that affect children are near and dear to the Governor's heart. Youth access is a huge point of contention in Montana, and one that we need to pay attention to. Our youth must have the guidance and the resources to make positive choices. The Leadership Initiative is a terrific way to encourage just that. By providing positive adult role models and solid research, and

Keeping our kids safe is one of the most important things we can each do and each of us has a responsibility to do just that.

— Governor Judy Martz

by creating the tools necessary for everyone from parents and teachers to policymakers and the general public to make change, this initiative can make a real difference for Montana's kids.

The issue of substance abuse is inextricably linked to another issue that all Montanans should be concerned about: youth suicide. Only motor vehicle accidents and homicides account for more deaths among our young people. Some of the roots of this issue lie in the social alienation intrinsic to large schools . . . high transient rates . . . and substance abuse at younger and younger ages.

On November 20, 2003, Governor Martz came forward to put her weight behind this issue as well. "Another part of human services that demands our attention is teen suicide. Suicide is a tragedy that touches the lives of countless Montanans. It is far more common problem than many people realize: Montana's suicide rate has been among the highest in the nation for decades. Currently we have the 2nd highest suicide rate in the nation and for children and teens, ages 10-19, suicide is the second leading cause of death. This is unacceptable."

Alcohol and drug abuse, teen risk behaviors, school drop-out, teen pregnancy, poverty, teen suicide . . . all of these issues are linked. Only by taking a holistic view of them—and by considering the policies and practices we have in place to address them—can we begin to realize the goal of keeping Montana's children alcohol free.

Jean Branscum serves as Policy Advisor for labor, corrections, health and human services in the Governor's Office. She has led efforts from the Governor's Office in addressing issues facing Montana, including substance abuse, healthcare workforce shortage, and the uninsured. Her responsibilities include policy development and coordination of agency activity with the Governor's Office.

Simply said, we are not effectively preventing Montana's youth from engaging in harmful and illegal activities. Montana's youth have the 2nd highest rate of illicit drug use, 6th highest rate of tobacco use, and 4th highest rate of alcohol use of all 50 states. Montana's youth are using marijuana and sedatives at rates above the national average. The costs of not preventing substance abuse are high in terms of both human lives and monetarily. Montanans spent approximately \$256 million in 1998 on programs related to the negative effects of substance abuse. Less than 1% of that was invested in prevention and treatment.

—Governor's Task Force on Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Policy: *The Blueprint for Montana's Future: A Living Document* is online at: http://www.discoveringmontana.com/gov2/content/drugcontrol/FINAL_ATOD_Task_Force_Report.pdf

Family Therapy in Cascade County

By Jennifer Bosley

The Family Therapy Program

Process:

1. Identification/Referral
2. Assessment
3. Therapeutic Services
4. Education and Behavior Change
5. Termination/Follow-up.

Goals:

- reduced child involvement in the Juvenile Justice System
- reduced antisocial, high risk and self-defeating behaviors (drug/alcohol use)
- reduced family conflict
- identified family skills/attitudes around problematic behaviors of youth
- reduced interpersonal problems
- improved family communication and supportiveness
- improved problem solving skills
- improved school attendance and grades
- improved child adjustment

Research shows that treatment is more effective when it is matched with the offender's risk level (Andrews and Bonta, 1994) and that higher risk offenders are much more likely to benefit from treatment than low risk offenders (Andrews and Bonta, 1994).

The Cascade County Regional Youth Services Center (CCRYSC) is a non-profit juvenile detention center opened in Great Falls in 1994 and licensed by the Department of Corrections. Our mission is to provide for the care, welfare, safety and security of youth. This includes not only youth who are detained for criminal offenses, but also for youth and families in the community. The Family Therapy Program was founded nearly three years ago through a Community Incentive Project Grant to help families get through the often troublesome adolescent years.

Best Practice Program/Research

The Family Therapy Program is based on Dr. Don Gordon's best practice program: *Home Based Behavior Systems Family Therapy*. Dr. Gordon designed the cd-rom based Parenting Adolescents Wisely (PAW) Program, which has demonstrated success rates in reducing delinquency, decreasing family conflict, and decreasing substance abuse for both youth and parents. It was recently named an *Exemplary Program* by the Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Early identification and reduction of risk factors contributing to criminogenic behavior form the basis of the program. Research has shown that risk factors for criminal behavior include antisocial behavior, antisocial personality traits, antisocial peers, antisocial values, substance abuse and dysfunctional family (Andrews and Bonta, 1994). These identifiers are assessed through initial interview of the youth and his/her family to understand the treatment profile unique to that family. It is critical for behavioral programs to employ risk assessment mea-

sures that measure a wide range of criminogenic need factors (Gendreau and Little, 1994).

Target Population

The CCRYSC targets youth aged 10-16 who are demonstrating such high risk

behaviors as alcohol/drug use, truancy, runaway, shoplifting or fighting with peers or parents. Because of CCRYSC's unique involvement with the Great Falls Police Department, youth court and the community, family needs can be addressed efficiently and effectively. We serve a wide variety of cultures and considerations are made when dealing with culturally diverse populations. We see Native American, Hispanic, and Asian American families as well as Caucasian. Every effort is made to be sensitive to families' unique needs.

Program Implementation

PAW is a fairly easy program to implement and does not require licensed mental health staff. On-site training specific to the needs of the agency and community is provided over the course of a few days. An IBM computer is needed in order to utilize the CD-ROM-based materials; two therapists run family sessions. Masters level counseling and social work interns, as well as bachelor's level staff with backgrounds in human services, are used in this program. Participants receive pre- and post-testing materials and a workbook.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Data analysis for our first two years shows very promising results in reducing family conflict and improving child adjustment. We had over 100 referrals and analyzed data on 66 subjects (37 treatment, 29 comparison). Of the 37 treatment subjects, 31 completed the Family Therapy Program; 6 families were still in the program at the time this article was written. The 29 comparison subjects used for the study had either dropped out, been referred to other programming, were no-shows or had attended only a minimal number of sessions.

To test the hypotheses of reduced numbers or intensity of problem behaviors and increased knowledge of adaptive parenting skills following participation in family therapy, repeated measures analyzing variances were performed using the Eyberg Behavioral Inventory Total Problems, Problem Intensity, and the Parent Knowledge Test.

To test the hypotheses that children had improved adjustment—thereby reducing delinquency and substance use—fol-

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Family Therapy

Continued from Page 14

lowing their participation in family therapy, repeated measures analyzing variances were performed using the Minnesota Adolescent Youth Survey Instrument (MAYSI-2) Total Score*, and Risk Assessment for Treatment Total Scores.

Repeated measures Analyses Of Variance (ANOVAS) were calculated on all dependent variables to determine if there were statistically significant improvements on any of the variables over time.

- Results showed statistically significant reductions in total problems and problem intensity over time.
- Total scores on the MAYSI-2 showed statistically significant reductions. There were also statistically significant reductions on the following MAYSI-2 subscales: *Angry/Irritable* and *Depressed/Anxious*.

The Risk Assessment for Treatment (RAFT) is another Juvenile Standardized Assessment tool. The subscales profile the youth in the areas of: *Criminal Involvement, Education, Family Disorganization, Acting Out, Risk Taking, Emotional Management, and Treatment Immunity*. This tool also incorporates a change index. The treatment profile in the above areas determines the best place for intervening in a youth's problem behaviors. Concrete data is measured relative to recidivism, school attendance and grades, family management skills, family cohesion, parental skills and knowledge, family conflict, and family attitudes. The RAFT questionnaire was administered as a pre-test, then in six months and one year. One-year follow-up data was available for 20 of the 37 subjects.

The first analysis compared total scores on the RAFT pretest and at 6 months. There was a statistically significant reduction in total scores. There was also a statistically significant improvement on the following subscales: *Education, Family Disorganization, Acting Out, Emotional Management and Treatment Immunity*.

The second analysis compared total scores at pretest and 1-year—again, there was a statistically significant reduction in scores. There were also significant improvements on the subscales of *Education, Family Disorganization, Emotional Management and Treatment Immunity*.

For more information, contact Pat McGowan B.S. LAC Program Coordinator at 406-454-6930.

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The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Prevention Resource Center and the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

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Want to Sponsor a VISTA?

The Prevention Resource Center is looking for community non-profit, school or governmental agencies in Montana to sponsor one or more full-time AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) for one year.

The PRC assists Montana communities in identifying, developing, implementing, sustaining, and evaluating prevention programs. The five priority areas of the PRC are:

1. Reduce child abuse and neglect by promoting child safety and healthy family functioning;
2. Reduce youth use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs by promoting alternative activities and healthy lifestyles;
3. Reduce youth violence and crime by promoting the safety of all citizens;

4. Increase the percentage of Montana high school students who successfully transition from high school to work, post-secondary education, training and/or the military; and
5. Reduce teen pregnancy by promoting the concept that pregnancy and childrearing are serious responsibilities.

AmeriCorps*VISTA is a federally funded program that places members in community-based agencies, full-time for one year, to help implement goals and objectives identified by the community and sponsoring agency. The role of the VISTA is to mobilize human and other resources to increase the capacity within low-income communities.

For complete site application visit the PRC web site, www.state.mt.us/prc to download the application. Completed applications are due by 5 P.M. on March 12, 2004.



CorpsLINK

By Angela Michalek

Community service is a term that bears two meanings: one of altruism and one of debt. The Montana Conservation Corps addresses both sides of the coin in its rendering of community service.

In 1991, the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) began fostering a connection between young people and the natural environment through service. By hiring seasonal work crews, MCC teaches young adults job skills, educates them in natural resource management and environmental issues, and empowers them to give something back to their communities. In 1993, MCC secured funding through Americorps, which allowed it to grow and diversify.

While working with young adults, the Montana Conservation Corps realized the need to address adjudicated youth in Montana. This population, often considered to be at risk, has already exhibited a certain level of vulnerability to social pressure through their involvement in the justice system. Past the stage of prevention, the behavior of adjudicated youth becomes an issue of intervention. The juvenile justice system implements restorative justice by attempting to bond adjudicated youth with their communities through the obligation of community service. Through its desire to develop leadership skills in young adults and to these volunteers as mentors for adjudicated youth, MCC began the CorpsLINK Program using a grant from the Board of Crime Control.

CorpsLINK is a program for adjudicated youth between the ages of 12–18. It is designed to supervise youth while they complete their community service hours. Youth are referred to CorpsLINK by county probation officers. For every 8 community service hours, youth are assigned 3 mentoring hours. The mentoring hours are geared to encouraging youth to explore recreational options and to provide them with role models.

Since its inception in 1996, CorpsLINK has hired Americorps volunteers who have experience with, or a strong interest in, working with adjudicated youth. MCC provides volunteers with a living stipend and—at the end of the 9-month leadership development program—the National Service Trust provides each volunteer with \$4,725 of taxable income toward student loans. MCC provides CorpsLINK

leaders with an established program structure, training and the physical and mental tools needed to excel in their positions.

CorpsLINK holds community service projects for youth during after-school hours and eight hours on Saturday during the school year. Over the summer, the program runs eight hours a day, five days a week. CorpsLINK leaders develop their own schedules and their own community service projects. In 1999, CorpsLINK began the Kalispell Community Garden with a plot of land donated by the Kalispell City Parks. The leaders—working with adjudicated youth—farm half of the land, donating the organic produce to the Flathead Food Bank. The other half is open to community members.

The garden is just one of many projects. CorpsLINK is able to work with any non-profit organization or state agency, which have included Swan Ranger District, Citizens for a Better Flathead, Hungry Horse Ranger District, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Flathead County Parks, the Department of Natural Resource and Conservation and Adopt-A-Highway, to name a few.

CorpsLINK has met with the most success in the Kalispell region where the program has received an overwhelming amount of support from the Flathead County Juvenile Probation Office. Probation officers in Flathead County have done everything from administering consequences to uncooperative youth to developing a “youth tracker” position within their department to monitor completion of community service hours. Unfortunately, the other five regions of MCC have discontinued the program due to the lack of local support.

The youth of today will be tomorrow’s leaders. Much to their credit, community members are beginning to think altruistically and to take responsibility for *all* of the youth within the community. Together, they are starting to ask fundamental questions about providing youth with life skills and reintegrating previously institutionalized youth into the community. CorpsLINK has been just one piece of the big picture and it provided some meaning to the term *community service*.

Angela Michalek was a CorpsLINK leader in Kalispell this past season. She is from Illinois and graduated in 2002 from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana with a B.A. in French Studies.



CorpsLINK has been up and running since 1996, and has been a very successful program. Unfortunately it looks like the probation office lost funding for the program, so we won't be able to run CorpsLINK in '04. I would love to share information about the development and management of CorpsLINK if anyone is interested. We'd love to see it replicated or have someone pick up where we leave off. For more information, contact Lee Gault, Program Director Montana Conservation Corps at 406-587-4475 or lee@mtcorps.org.



PNA Data Bites:

Youth on Probation



outh who have been involved with the correctional system are at greater risk for many problem behaviors. Among the 17,695 8th, 10th & 12th grade students who responded to the 2002 Prevention Needs Assessment, 645 youth (65.9 percent males and 34.1 percent females) were on probation.

The survey revealed that youth on probation experience lifetime alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use at much higher rates than other youth. The greatest differences can be seen when looking at grade 8, where lifetime use rates for 10 of the 11 ATOD categories are over two times higher than those of the general student population. For lifetime use, probationers are over two times more likely to use cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and inhalants, and over three times more likely to use marijuana and sedatives. For drugs such as cocaine, sedatives, heroin, and hallucinogens, 8th grade probationer students are five to six times more likely to have used these drugs than their peers in the general population. While probationers in the 12th grade are also more likely to use ATODs, there is less of a difference between the probationers and the general population. The 12th grade probationers' use of marijuana and sedatives is still double that of the general population.

A comparison of 8th graders and 12th graders shows youth on probation start using substances earlier and more consistently than other youth. The results also indicate probationers are much more likely to experiment or use illicit drugs, as 76.6 percent of probationers in the 8th grade, 91.9 percent in 10th grade, and 85.7 percent in the 12th grade indicate they have tried "any" drug at least once in their lifetime (compared to 34.2 percent of general students in 8th, 50.2 percent in 10th, and 59.2 percent in 12th grade).

Compared to their peers in the same grade, the 8th grade probationers exhibit higher exposure to risk and lower exposure to protective factors. Some areas where a large percentage of probationers are at risk are: *Early Initiation of Problem (Antisocial) Behavior* which include such behaviors as



Substance Abuse, Delinquency, Violence, School Dropout and Teen Pregnancy and Associating with Friends who Engage in the Problem Behavior. These results emphasize the need to begin prevention early in a young person's life before problem behaviors begin. When we say *early* we are not talking about 6th grade—we need to start teaching refusal and other social skills as early as kindergarten. This will help prepare our youth for later in life when they encounter situations that encourage participation in problem behaviors.

When reviewing protective factors, the youth on probation were lowest in the peer/individual domain with lowest protection in *Social Skills* and *Belief in the Moral Order*. Probationers are reporting the lack of opportunities to become involved in their communities, give back to their community or participate in community organized events. The fact that all protective factors are below the state average suggests these youth do not perceive opportunities to become involved or receive rewards for becoming involved in health activities.

Prevention strategies need to be implemented in all areas youth are exposed to problem behaviors. This means prevention needs to happen at the community level, in the family, in schools and even among peers. The use of multiple prevention approaches will help youth obtain the social and refusal skills needed to resist the temptations to use substances, participate in delinquency and violence and drop out of school.

Source: Montana Prevention Needs Assessment Survey: Final Report 2002.

A youth who has one peer who uses drugs, comes from a home where there is a permissive attitude toward alcohol, tobacco or drug use, and who knows one adult who uses alcohol, tobacco or drugs has a 60% chance of abusing substances. Conversely, a youth with high levels of community and family bonding will have much lower risk of substance abuse. (Drug & Alcohol Prevention Risk & Protective Factor Reporting System: http://oraweb.hhs.state.mt.us:9999/prev_index.htm.)

Not in Our Town: Helena and Meth

We can make a difference—come see how. A full-day conference will be held at Our Redeemers Lutheran Church at 1400 Stuart Street (the corner of Stuart and Henderson) in Helena from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Saturday March 27th. For more information, contact Kathy Olson at 442-7842, Extension 205 or kathyo@ourredeemerlives.org.

Drug Court Publications Resource Guide

The Third Edition of the Drug Court Publications Resource Guide is intended to assist researchers and practitioners in identifying drug court-related information that will assist them in planning, implementing, enhancing, and evaluating their drug court programs. It provides a listing of publications that are relevant to the drug court field and is organized into three major categories: Drug Courts; Research, Evaluation, and Statistics; and Treatment and Substance Abuse.

For more information, go to <http://www.ndci.org/orderform.html>

Alive and Well in Cascade County: Community Youth Justice Councils

By Mary Rodrigues

The concept of Balanced and Restorative Justice is alive and well in Cascade County, which has nine active youth justice councils that intervene and attempt to provide positive impact on youthful offenders, victims and the community as a whole. The program is a project of the Alliance for Youth and strives to find sanctions that will not only help youth understand the harm they have done to their victims and to the community, but offer ways to repair that harm. It is also the councils' task to help the victim and community feel safe and whole again.

Youth justice councils are challenged to find creative but sound sanctions that will help the offender accomplish these aims. Some examples of current sanctions given out in Cascade County include:

- Enrolling in an educational class consistent with the youth's interests in order to foster knowledge and increase specialized skills (e.g., automotive class, web design, life guard training or babysitting);
- Community Service at the Native American Center;
- Preparing a skit or role play scenario enacting shoplifting—or writing a dialogue by researching and by talking with the store manager;
- Attending chemical dependency education classes; and
- Writing an essay or research paper.

Youth are often given a few different sanctions, community service being one. This provides the youth with a means of giving something back to the community. Apologies or apology letters to victims are almost always prescribed. The youth justice council is also able to recommend that the youth and/or the family take advantage of services that might include family coun-

seling, mental health or chemical dependency evaluations, parent support groups, drug testing or other support services.

The youth justice councils are also continually challenged to monitor themselves and ensure that they are upholding the basic tenets of the Balanced and Restorative model (BARJ). In their commitment to ensure success, the councils incorporate feedback from those involved.

As with most large-scale ventures, there is always room for improvement. Cascade County is undertaking an evaluation of its restorative justice efforts. One potentially powerful gap was identified

before the first task force even met—the lack of Native American representation in the council membership. We are currently recruiting with the

goal of making the youth justice councils a better option for Native American youth and their families. Native American members could help the council provide culturally appropriate—and more meaningful—sanctions for the Native American youth seen by the council.

We must embrace the message that the community has been saying to all of the youth: *This is your community and we care about your place in it.*

Those who work with balanced and restorative justice are encouraged by the

statistics and the positive comments from participants. For my part, I am grateful for a justice system that embraces and encourages this model, and for the many citizens who are willing to volunteer their time to help the youth and community reach for health, balance and wholeness.

The Alliance for Youth is committed to helping other communities implement models similar to their Youth Justice Councils project. For more information, contact Janet Meissner at janet_meissner@mail.gfps.k12.mt.us.

“(Community service) is good; it helps the community see that we’re not bad, we are working and helping.” —a youth offender

This process made me realize that it was my actions that were bad, not me personally. —a youth offender

MIP Changes

By Ken Taylor

The last legislative session brought several significant changes in MCA 45-5-624, the Minor in Possession law. The changes affected the sanctions applied to minors found in violation and provided new authority for the Department of Public Health and Human Services to develop curriculum materials for use by state approved programs. Following is an introduction to these changes:

The assessment required for a second or subsequent MIP can be done by four recognized entities, a state-approved chemical dependency program, a program identified by the courts, a program under contract with the Department of Corrections or an approved hospital program. The assessment must be performed by a Licensed Addiction Counselor (LAC).

Driver's License

A driver's license is one of the most prized possessions of any teen. There are two places where the driver's license is mentioned in the statute. For a minor, the driver's license is to be confiscated upon conviction of an MIP, as noted in the table

above. The license will also be suspended if the person fails to complete the MIP Course.

- 1st Offense: 3-month suspension
- 2nd Offense: 9-month suspension
- 3rd or Subsequent Offenses: 12-month suspension

Parental Involvement: One of the more controversial changes is the requirement that parents participate in the MIP class for minors, or individuals under age 18. There is clear evidence from clinical research that having parents involved makes a difference. For one thing, parents need to know the liabilities they could incur from their child's drinking. For another, parents need to know the potential long-term health impacts of the child's use of intoxicating chemicals. Finally, parents need the skills to address their minor child's substance use.

MIP Curriculum: A new curriculum has been developed for use by state-approved chemical dependency programs. Western Montana Addiction Services developed the curriculum through a contract with the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division and training in the curriculum was offered in October 2003. There are currently plans to offer another training for interested parties by July 2004.

Summary

The more we learn about the probable impacts of intoxicating chemicals on the developing adolescent brain, the more reasons we have for public policies that delay use until age 21. To be effective, these policies must be supported by effective laws and the mechanisms to ensure that the laws have the desired effect. The changes in the MIP statute are an important step in improving the response to Montana's adolescent drinking problem.

Ken Taylor is a Prevention Officer with the Chemical Dependency Bureau of the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division. For more information, he can be reached at ketaylor@state.mt.us.



MIP Sanctions for Those Under Age 18			
	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd and Subsequent Offenses
Fine	\$100 to \$300	\$200 to \$600	\$300 to \$900
Community Service	20 hours	40 hours	60 hours
MIP Class with Parents Participating	pay all costs	pay all costs	pay all costs
Drivers License Confiscated	30 days	6 months	6 months
CD Assessment		as provided in Section 8	as provided in Section 8
MIP Sanctions for Those Aged 18-20			
Fine	Not to exceed	Not to exceed \$200	Not to exceed \$500
Community Service	May be ordered	May be ordered	May be ordered
Alcohol Information Course at an			
Alcohol Treatment Program			Shall be ordered
Imprisonment by Discretion of the Court			County jail for a term not to exceed 6 months

2004 Summer Institute

When: June 14-18, 2004

Where: On the campus of MSU
Bozeman

Registration is available at the following
Website: <http://www.montana.edu/cs/mbi>. For additional information, contact
Terry Baldus or Gina Newman
at (406) 522-6028.

Implementing MBI

- Havre Sunnyside Elementary has created "T-charts" listing student behavioral expectations for recess, bus, cafeteria, restrooms and classes and have those posted in each area.
- Whitefish Central School began a recess-before-lunch program that encourages students to have healthier eating habits, as well as reduces behavior problems and increases academic engagement. Students go outside for recess and then come in for lunch.
- Whittier School in Bozeman has written and recorded music to teach appropriate behaviors.
- Some schools organize schoolwide assemblies to teach the "manner of the month" with follow-up lesson plans for the classroom.

"Our schools, all of them, must be sanctuaries of safety, and civility and respect." — President Clinton, October 1998

Prevention That Works: The Montana Behavioral Initiative

By Susan Bailey-Anderson

"Name-calling, put-downs and bullying do hurt children and create a climate that can thwart learning and breed violence."
—author unknown

The Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) combines behavior and instructional practices in the classroom and common areas of the school to enable teaching and learning. One of the basic premises of the MBI is that violence falls on a continuum that starts with put-downs and can end with murder, rape and suicide. Often, we think of violence in terms of the criminal behavior making headlines, but violence doesn't begin with abuse or brutality. Violence begins with behavior and attitudes that individuals have the power to control. It begins with a lack of concern for others.

The MBI focuses in on the very heart of school climate: how students and staff treat each other. The initiative encourages schools to develop "an ongoing process of compassion and consideration for the rights, feelings and property of others—a process of creating a welcoming positive atmosphere throughout our schools and communities." The MBI teams use a *Blueprint for Implementation* to work through key indicators. Using these key indicators, school and community teams implement the MBI process to improve school climate and culture and to identify areas of concern.

Key Indicators

Training—The MBI training is obtained through the annual MBI Summer Institute, MBI facilitator training and in many other ways. The annual Summer Institute offers strands appropriate for everyone who works with youth. An early childhood strand offers Head Start personnel and preschool teachers workshops geared to working with our youngest children. Other strands provide training for school resource officers, beginning and advanced MBI teams and others.

Teaming—MBI teams are created at school sites and may include stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, school resource officers, parents, other school personnel and probation officers. The MBI teams collaboratively solve problems, re-

view data, strategize, address priorities for their school sites and establish goals and action steps.

Evaluation—Data-based decision making is a component of evaluation. The MBI teams collect data in a variety of ways, through office or playground referrals, suspensions and expulsions, parental, personnel and student surveys to identify priorities, establish goals and strategies for school improvement.

Once priorities have been established, MBI teams identify strategies using validated, research-based best practices, then detail activities at a variety of levels—schoolwide, classroom, individual, and parent and family.

Proactive Support Systems—MBI supports the implementation of best practice procedures in Montana's schools, fostering beliefs that value all children. The MBI vision also leads to beliefs that positive and proactive approaches to problems produce the most satisfying results.

Community Involvement—This final key indicator includes activities specifically designed to involve the community through participation on MBI teams, in school-business partnerships, and through community learn and serve programs.

Prevention

The MBI effectively addresses the three primary ranges of student behavior:

- all students (whole school)
- some students (targeted classroom or small groups) needing more explicit behavioral academic or social instruction; and
- a few students (individuals who have more significant behavioral and social needs).

This is clearly illustrated by the pyramid graphic on page 21.

Continued on Page 21

Montana Behavioral Initiative

Continued from Page 20

Schools address the ranges of student behavior through the MBI process using the key indicators. Montana's MBI schools are doing an exemplary job of providing universal interventions and designing schoolwide systems that prevent behavior from escalating to other levels. Examples of schoolwide systems include consistent schoolwide discipline systems and greeting programs. Schoolwide discipline systems involve educators, cafeteria people, and custodial workers who all address behavior problems in a consistent manner while promoting a positive environment.

Since initiating behavioral expectations, Montana schools note drops in office referrals from hallways, cafeterias, restrooms and bus-loading areas. The expectations have been posted through the schools and taught to students.

After going through MBI training, many schools have adopted new practices to improve school climate and to encourage positive interactions. Examples are posting teachers in the hallways to greet students by name and meet them at classroom doors. Staff members use positive reminders instead of punitive practices for minor infractions. Schools have worked with their resource and probation officers to help students who *have* had a brush with the law slip smoothly back into school without losing credit.

Targeted Group Interventions

The MBI teams have targeted group intervention supporting students in improving academics and completing homework assignments through homework buddies and after-school homework classrooms. Schools report an increase in academic teaching time due to dramatic reductions in officer referrals. This has also improved morale among students and teachers. Other targeted interventions include groups for students who are at-risk of drug and alcohol problems, and groups that teach appropriate social behaviors to students with behavior problems. These groups provide opportunities for teaching and practicing appropriate behaviors.

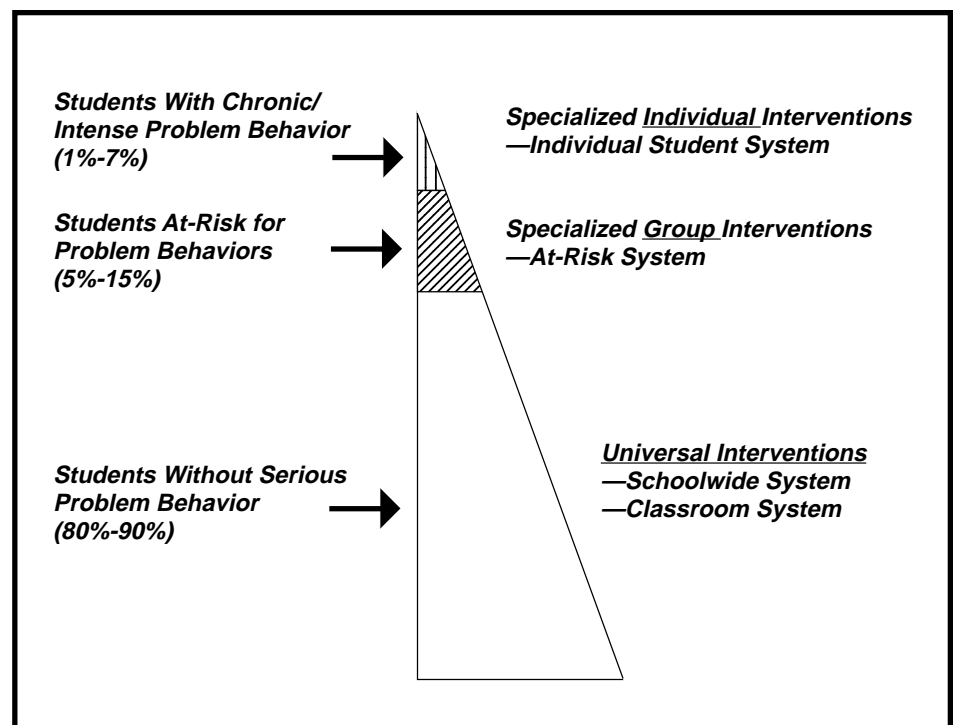
Specialized individual student intervention includes functional assessments, establishing replacement behaviors and developing effective behavior support plans for individual students. The MBI process,

when implemented consistently and appropriately, provides a sustained effort to improve teaching and learning and is likely to reduce problem behaviors among students. Better teaching, better behavior and higher achievement are intertwined. Proactive policies must become a part of the school culture, communicated clearly and repeatedly to students, parents and others. Most importantly, they must be folded in with other strategies for bolstering social skills, brightening school climate and boosting student achievement. Probably the most important component is to create and maintain a positive and welcoming school climate, which is the heart and soul of the MBI.

For more information about the MBI, contact Susan Bailey-Anderson, Office of Public Instruction, (406) 444-2046, sbanderson@state.mt.us or visit the web at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/MBI/>

Examples of Schoolwide Efforts

- Helena Middle School has a morning greeting program that involves school personnel and community members who meet and greet students each morning as students enter the school. This effort creates a positive, inviting environment.
- Castle Rock Middle School in Billings has designed a process for identifying all academic achievement, whether it is recognition for straight A's or improvement from a D to a C.



Clandestine Drug Labs and the Environment

By Ed Thamke, Montana Department of Environmental Quality Enforcement Division



A 1989 letter from the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to the President of the United States stated that "the issue of cleaning up a seized clandestine drug laboratory site is a complex and controversial one . . . DEA, with EPA's concurrence, maintains the position that *the law enforcement responsibilities terminate when the law enforcement official notifies the property owner, and state, local environmental, or public health agencies in writing of possible site contamination.*"

On average, for every pound of meth manufactured, five pounds of toxic waste is produced. Explosions and fires are common at the labs and the dump sites.

The DEA headquarters in Montana is in Billings. Barry Lucero (406-657-6020) is the current Resident Agent in Charge.

The Montana Drug Task Forces are as follows:

Big Muddy River Drug Task Force:
653-1093 (Wolf Point)

Eastern Montana Drug Task Force:
874-3362 (Miles City)

Missouri River Drug Task Force:
582-2110 (Bozeman)

Northwest Montana Drug Task Force:
758-5878 (Kalispell)

West Central Drug Task Force:
721-5700 (Missoula)

Southwest Montana Drug Task Force:
723-7461 (Butte)

Tri-Agency Drug Task Force:
265-1192 (Havre)

MDCI Statewide Drug Task Force:
329-1450 (Missoula)

forcement official notifies the property owner, and state, local environmental, or public health agencies in writing of possible site contamination."

This statement evolved into a national policy directing the DEA to fund the removal of hazardous wastes discovered during drug lab busts. Residual hazardous materials affecting the environment were the responsibility of state and local agencies. In Montana, notification has typically consisted of posting the exterior of the property, with an occasional notation to the property deed. The DEA's policy, combined with a phenomenal proliferation of clandestine drug labs (CDLs), has put state and local agencies in the difficult position of developing and funding their own policies/procedures to deal with the issues.

In Montana, approximately 85 percent of CDLs are associated with the production of methamphetamine. Marijuana growing operations are next, with ecstasy, LSD, PCP and other labs discovered occasionally. The manufacture of meth is a simple process created by combining ephedrine with commonly available household products including reagents and solvents in a process known as "cooking."

It is commonly recognized that the indoor environmental threats are more serious than outdoor. This is because the cooking impregnates the home with chemical compounds that may harm human health. The extent and nature of this threat

is not fully understood or predictable, but there are serious environmental issues attached to dumping the waste chemicals and by-products on the land, in surface water and into septic tanks.

The extent of environmental damage is related to the location of the CDL, degree of care by the cooks, the method of manufacture, and the duration of the activity. Meth cooks are *not* chemists, and while the products used are common, they are not used in the prescribed manner. When combined inappropriately, they can produce acutely toxic gas and deleterious waste. In addition to the demands on justice, social, health and environmental agencies, CDLs also impact landlord liability, insurance rates, property value (at and around the CDL) and property tax revenue.

DEQ Activities

Montana's Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) began receiving complaints and inquiries about CDLs in 1997. Reports typically come from city and county officials asking how to deal with the

environmental issues. It is also common to receive calls from property sellers/buyers, landlords, tenants, neighbors, lending institutions, attorneys and reporters.

Our policy has been to regard CDLs as a hazardous material (HazMat) spill site. Parties responsible for HazMat spills, typically fuels, oils or other hydrocarbons are also held responsible for the cleanup. HazMat spills associated with CDLs are more difficult to get cleaned up because the person(s) responsible are incarcerated, destitute or dead. This means that cleanup falls to the property owner or—if the property is abandoned—to local government.

Those evaluating CDL cleanup often do not know how to begin. MDEQ has made it clear that we have no authority inside meth lab structures. We recommend sampling and analytical procedures and we

It is impossible to estimate how many calls we have received about meth labs that have not been logged in because the caller would not identify her/himself or the property in question.

CPS: Your child's ears shouldn't be higher than the seat back

By Patty Carrell, Montana SAFE KIDS Coordinator

Car crashes are the #1 preventable cause of death of children, as well as a major cause of permanent brain damage, epilepsy and spinal cord injuries. A sudden stop at 30 miles per hour could cause the same crushing force on your child's brain and body as a fall from a 3-story building. Fortunately we can prevent most of these deaths and serious injuries. Unfortunately, fewer than 10 percent of children between the ages of 4-8 use booster seats.

Effective October 1 of this year, Montana law requires all children under age six and weighing less than 60 pounds to be properly secured in a child safety restraint when riding in a motorized vehicle. The law upgrade is a significant change from the previous state law, which only required children under age 2 to be secured in a child safety restraint and children between the ages of 2 and 4 weighing less than 40 pounds, to be in a child restraint or a vehicle safety belt.

Montana is one of the first wave of 22 states and the District of Columbia to up-

grade the Child Passenger Safety (CPS) laws. More have CPS bills pending. The targeted group of these upgrades is children ages 4-6 years, many of whom have outgrown their car seats, but for whom booster seats are recommended.

Booster Seats

Seat belts are not designed for young children. A booster seat raises the child so that the seat belt fits properly. The shoulder belt should cross the child's chest and rest snugly on the shoulder, midway between their neck and the point of the shoulder (crossing the collarbone). The lap belt should rest low across the pelvic area and never across the abdominal area, as this can cause severe or fatal injuries. Use a booster seat after your child outgrows the child safety seat and until s/he is big enough to use a seat belt and properly—usually around 8 years of age.

Is a child ready for seat belts?

A 5-Step Test

1. Does the child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do the child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross the shoulder between the neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

Errors to avoid:

- Putting two people in one belt
- Putting shoulder belt under arm or behind back
- Using only lap belt with a booster
- Putting any child under 12 years of age in the front seat

For more information, call Patty Carrell, Montana SAFE KIDS Coalition Coordinator at Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (406.449.8611) or see our web site: hmhb-mt.org

Clandestine Drug Labs

Continued from Page 22

supply a list of environmental contractors. To evaluate lab waste dumps outside the structure and in septic tanks, an inventory of the materials encountered at the lab site is helpful. Unfortunately, inventories are rarely available and, even if they are, the list of products is rarely complete.

Between 7/97 and 12/03, MDEQ logged 38 CDL reports into our database. In May 2002, the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation, Narcotics Bureau provided the following information: 82 CDL busts for 7/1/98 through 4/29/02, including DEA and Montana Drug Task Force busts. The cost to remove hazardous materials from the 82 CDL sites was listed as \$585,271.80.

MDEQ notifies local health departments and works with property owners if an environmental threat is evident, but has moved slowly in asking local law enforcement agencies to report CDLs. This is because of the potential for being unable to respond effectively—and because roles and responsibilities for Montana's state agencies have not been established or funded.

Impacts resulting from the manufacture of illicit drugs are variable and unpredictable. Public agency oversight will require detailed analysis to find long-term solutions. If the Montana Legislature determines that human health and environmental impacts associated with clandestine drug labs needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive manner, it will be incumbent upon them or the federal government to provide the financial and human resources to do so.

For the past seven years, Ed Thamke has served as the Complaint Management Section Chief and has been responsible for the agency's response to citizen complaints, spills, and methamphetamine issues. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality recently promoted Ed Thamke to Bureau Chief of the newly created Waste & Underground Tank Management Bureau within the Permitting and Compliance Division.

The Last Word



I stepped in as the new Chief of the Chemical Dependency Bureau in December. This field is not new to me—I have been involved in prevention and in chemical dependency treatment throughout my career. I bring with me a goal of strengthening communication between the Bureau and providers, communities, legislators and consumers—and a belief that enhanced communication can and will help us look at how we can create a better system using the resources we have.

Substance abuse weaves through the most difficult issues we face in Montana. It's rampant among those involved with the justice and corrections systems and it's there in the most painful women's issues. Co-occurrence is the norm among people

with mental illness, and it walks in the shoes of many of our most impoverished citizens. Substance abuse is no stranger to our homeless, and it nudges young people toward school drop-out, teen pregnancy and loss of hope for a bright future.

Do I believe that *any* of these individuals want to be there? *Not for a minute*. Do I believe that they intended to fall through the cracks or get caught up in one system or another? *Of course not*. What I do believe is that we need to learn how to do a better job of helping once they have. Education and prevention are two of the keys. Accountability and twin focuses on outcome and the application of science-based programming are others.

We have an opportunity right now to pull together in a way we never have before, and we must. The mental health and chemical dependency systems need to work together at the state level, as mental health and chemical dependency professionals

need to work together at the treatment level. We need to coordinate services and do what's right for clients, families and communities. We need to focus on cooperation, not only because it's the buzzword of the times, but because it works.

I plan to make *teamwork* the theme of my tenure in this office. I will be hands-on. I will keep an open door and an open mind. I'm willing to learn and I'm willing to listen. We have a lot to do in Montana to mold the system to fit out needs . . . to educate and to practice prevention where it will do the most good. This is not my last word on the subject, but it is my lasting promise. I look forward to working with you.

*Joan Cassidy, Bureau Chief
Chemical Dependency Bureau*

CSAP Center for
Substance Abuse
Prevention
Substance Abuse and Mental
Health Services Administration

*A joint publication of the **Prevention Resource Center**
and the **Addictive and Mental Disorders Division***



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2,000 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$2.18 per copy, for a total cost of \$4,358.98, which includes \$4,090.45 for production and printing and \$268.53 for distribution.



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